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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [EAID](#) [ETTC](#) [EUN](#) [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [SW](#)
SUBJECT: A/S CARSON'S SWEDEN VISIT AND U.S.-EU TROIKA
MEETING ON AFRICA JULY 14

Classified By: CDA Robert Silverman for
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1.(SBU) Summary: Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Johnnie Carson represented the U.S. at the EU troika meeting on Africa issues held July 14 in Stockholm. The agenda included the Horn of Africa (Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea), Sudan, Zimbabwe, Kenya, unconstitutional changes of government (Madagascar, Mauritania, Guinea, and Niger), and the Sahel. In addition to the agenda items, A/S Carson raised the issues of piracy and drug trafficking in Africa. The troika meeting provided the context for a good exchange of views on many issues, on which the U.S. and the EU generally agree. A/S Carson and Head of the Africa Department at the Swedish MFA Ambassador Anders Hagelberg declared the meeting a great success. Hagelberg said the EU and the U.S. are &more like-minded than ever before,8 adding that he looked forward to a close cooperation during the Swedish EU Presidency.

12. (C) A/S Carson and the CDA had a pull-aside on July 14 with Swedish MFA State Secretary Frank Belfrage to discuss the intense public pressure on the Swedish government to get Eritrea to release imprisoned Swedish-Eritrean journalist Isaak Dawit. Belfrage asked if the U.S. had insights on approaches to Eritrea. End Summary.

Overview

13. (U) Head of the Swedish MFA Africa Department Ambassador Anders Hagelberg, chairing for the EU, opened the meeting by praising President Obama's July 12 speech in Accra, Ghana, saying he saw it as "re-shaping" U.S. Africa engagement in offering the platform that will open new opportunities for U.S.-EU cooperation on the continent. A/S Carson explained that the U.S. will focus on placing "Africa in the hands of Africans." The U.S. will be a partner in four key areas: democracy and governance; economic challenges; public health; and conflict mitigation. We also share the EU's focus on climate change in the Africa context and on the effects of the global economic crisis in Africa.

Somalia

14. (C) Somalia was the meeting's top priority, and the troika spent the majority of the morning discussing it. A/S Carson led the discussion by explaining U.S. support for the Djibouti Process under the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), Sheik Sharif and the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). He outlined Somalia's problems, calling these issues a &festering sore that impacts the entire region.8 The U.S. and the EU agreed that they need to address the following issues: Somali refugee flows to neighboring countries; spillover effects of Ethiopian and Eritrean hot and cold war tensions; movement of smuggled goods; piracy;

the arrival of foreign fighters and their relation to Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaeda; and continued efforts to find the individuals responsible for the bombing of U.S. embassies in Africa in 1998. A/S Carson emphasized the importance of a comprehensive political solution that does not simply treat the symptoms, but also treats the root causes of the internal conflict in Somalia. He expressed deep concern for the refugee problem, citing figures of nearly 270,000 refugees currently in camps in northern Kenya and an additional 5-6,000 refugees entering Kenya each month.

15. (C) Swedish Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa Marika Fahlen responded, pointing out that the EU is the largest donor to Somalia and that the EU hopes to harmonize EU-US policies. Fahlen expressed fear that the TFG lacks a clear vision and is now less able to articulate the Djibouti Commitment upon which its legitimacy is based. Fahlen noted both U.S. and EU donations to the AMISOM and questioned AMISOM's capability, asking whether or not the EU should increase its mandate for AMISOM without providing more equipment. Additionally, Fahlen stated that the EU and the U.S. should work to stop the "financial middle man" and interrupt the flow of equipment to Al-Shabaab. She addressed the symbiotic relationship between the pirates and Al-Shabaab, an exchange of service for protection. Fahlen also took up the role of the Somali diaspora (25,000) in Sweden and Somali-Swedes fighting in Somalia. She expressed that perhaps the diaspora could possibly play a constructive role in aiding Somalia, if properly encouraged. A/S Carson noted that the U.S. was also very concerned about the foreign fighters in Somalia, some of whom traveled there in response to Ethiopian engagement. Both sides expressed concern that

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Sheik Sharif might call for the return of Ethiopian troops.

16. (C) Jose Costa Pereira of the Council Secretariat asked about the idea of a special EU representative to the Horn of Africa. A/S Carson emphasized that the TFG must show that it is an effective government, not just a symbol. The U.S. will continue to support AMISOM, but will urge the Algerians first to provide troop transportation. A/S Carson agreed with his EU interlocutors that Eritrea acts as a regional spoiler in Somalia not because it loves Al-Shabaab but because Eritrea seeks to undermine Ethiopia. Additionally, A/S Carson suggested that the U.S. and the EU work to energize the seven IGAD states individually coordinate representations and joint demarches in Nairobi; and ask Kenya not to serve as a port for foreign fighters and illegal trade.

Ethiopia-Eritrea

17. (C) Both the U.S. and the EU voiced similar concerns about Ethiopia and Eritrea. A/S Carson said he agreed with the EU assessment that "political space" has narrowed in Ethiopia. Amb. Hagelberg described the situation as sensitive, but not as sensitive as it has been, stating that the EU shouldn't be too shy about the border dispute. The EU places elections at the center of the Ethiopian agenda and is concerned with election observation and instability that could result following the wrong election results, he said. A/S Carson stressed the importance of resolving the Eritrea-Ethiopia border dispute by getting Ethiopia to live up to its Algeria Agreement commitment, adding that the EU might be better positioned to achieve this. A/S Carson, noting that "we're stymied," asked if EU access to dialogue with Ethiopia has actually produced influence. Delegates admitted that the Europeans were frustrated too, and said that the EU would reassess its Eritrea policy during the Swedish Presidency.

Sudan

18. (C) A/S Carson said the EU and the U.S. shared much the same position on Sudan regarding the elections, the north-south divide, and the situation in Darfur. He led the discussion and emphasized that if the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) is not concluded, efforts to end the humanitarian crisis in Darfur will be ineffective. A/S Carson commented that any referendum calling for the division of Sudan should not necessarily have to result in an "immediate split" of the country. The Council Secretariat's Pereira noted that the CPA ends soon and that the international community needs to address post 2011 political, economic, and security arrangements. Ambassador Fahlen added that Darfur has become so politicized that it too is its own player in the peace process, adding that dialogue should include rebel groups. Eritrea has had a role in training Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) rebels in Darfur, so it needs to be a player in the peace process as well. A/S Carson stated that the U.S. was uncertain as to how important the work of the Mbeki Panel would be, adding that the U.S. hopes it be consistent with other efforts. Amb. Hagelberg stated that the International Criminal Court's (ICC) indictment of Bashir has handicapped Europe's relations with Sudan.

Zimbabwe

19. (C) Amb. Hagelberg led the discussion for the EU side, saying that along with Somalia, Zimbabwe would be at the top of the EU priority list during the Swedish Presidency. (It will also feature prominently on the agenda of the October EU-South Africa Summit.) The Commission's Roger Moore, Director of the Horn of Africa and Southern Africa, Indian Ocean and Pacific (ACP III), and A/S Carson exchanged views on meetings with Morgan Tsvangirai and his GOZ delegation during their recent visits to the U.S. and Europe. Moore opined that relations between Tsvangirai and Mugabe's Zanu/PF factions seemed both "complementary and competing," a description with which A/S Carson agreed. Moore said that Zimbabwe and the EU have agreed to produce "joint roadmaps," with Zimbabwe doing one related to commitments under the "global political agreement," and the Commission addressing the normalization of EU-Zimbabwe relations. The goal would then be to build bridges (linkages) between the two roadmaps. Moore admitted that there was probably little chance of a successful outcome to this endeavor, but it was all that was going at the moment. The Europeans listened eagerly to A/S Carson's detailed recounting of the GOZ visit to both the White House and the State Department, and of A/S Carson's

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recent meeting with Mugabe at Sirte. (Mugabe rejected all approaches about "his" GPA and insisted that his "favorable legacy" in the history books has already been established.) A/S Carson also expressed concerns about Mugabe's possible successor(s), while noting that the leader is still healthy and vigorous. The successor generation contains some "bad apples," but there are also some, for example Vice President Joyce Mujuru, who do recognize the need for change in Zimbabwe.

Kenya

110. (C) A/S Carson stated that he is deeply concerned about the turn of events in Kenya. The coalition is fragile and the process is not moving forward, he opined. All delegations expressed approval of the agreement brokered by Kofi Annan and fear that Kenya's fragile coalition could falter. A/S Carson noted the failure of the Kenyan government to prosecute corruption, human rights violations and extra-judicial killings and only "patchwork" progress on reform. The EC called the situation in Kenya depressing but still recognized its potential in regard to its thriving private sector, independent media, and strong civil society. Hagelberg said that the U.S. and the EU share many of the same concerns and should keep up the pressure on the reform

agenda.

Madagascar

¶11. (C) Both sides expressed the need for involvement regarding the problem of unconstitutional governments. A/S Carson emphasized the need to nurture and support democracy. He noted that the African Union embraces democracy as a principle and must support and reward progress. In regard to Madagascar in particular, A/S Carson expressed hope for further AU partnership and a need to break the "cycle of elite entitlement" in the country. All, or else none of the current presidential candidates should have the ability run, and the U.S. prefers that no current government members run in the next election. Carmen de la Pena, representing the incoming Spanish Presidency of the EU, stated that the international community needs to send Madagascar a common message and might get more strongly behind the SADC mediation efforts of former Mozambican President Chissano.

Mauritania

¶12. (C) All delegations acknowledged the risks associated with the upcoming elections. A/S Carson emphasized that the international community should stay engaged after the elections, honor the results, and make sure that if the current government loses that it does not seek revenge. De la Pena expressed fear of a post-election coup and called Mauritania a situation waiting for a crisis.⁸

Guinea

¶13. (C) Conversation on Guinea-Conakry was short. A/S Carson raised the topics of elections and the increasing concern about narcotraffickers operating in the country. The EU delegates commented that leadership in the country is isolated and difficult to influence. They expressed fears that the government will not live up to promises of elections and noted their concerns about drug trafficking.

Sahel

¶14. (C) The EU has committed to a series of fact-finding missions in the region. The first has been Mali, and in September it will focus on Mauritania and Niger. De la Pena shared her delegation's findings with the group, and emphasized the need for Europe not to solve the region's problems but to provide help and support. A/S Carson added that Mali and Algeria must work together to counter the terrorist threat in the region, but the international community should not confuse the historical, political, and social problems related to Tuareg insurgents with the growing Al-Qaeda presence in the region. The EC's Moore stated that threats in the region "feed off of one another," and added that security forces in the region must be strengthened.

U.S. Requests

¶15. (C) A/S Carson requested that that the EU member states

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consider a proposal to prosecute and imprison pirates who attack their respective flagged vessels. The Council's Pereira explained that this issue would not fall under EU competency, but is up to member states, stressing that piracy is not a crime under the criminal codes in these countries as well. A further complication would be that in some Member States, captured pirates might even be able to apply for assylum. Nevertheless, the EU side took note of A/S Carson's request.

¶16. (C) A/S Carson also requested that the EU consider prosecuting and imprisoning drug traffickers caught in Africa that are subject to Interpol, international or European warrants. The EC responded that the feasibility of this would depend on the type of crime. The Europeans seemed to think the Latin American drug trafficking problem in Africa has decreased and that many of the drug traffickers are now of local origin.

Other Discussions

¶17. (C) CDA Robert Silverman hosted a dinner for A/S Carson on July 13, giving him the opportunity to meet a number of key Swedish officials who did not attend the troika meeting. Dinner topics included the Sudan, Eritrea and Somalia. Horn of Africa Special Envoy Marika Fahlen mentioned that an Al-Shabaab &spiritual8 leader and cleric recently spoke at a Gothenburg mosque to recruit young Somali-Swedes, which prompted major concerns from the Somalia diaspora in Sweden. The diaspora has now invited a delegation of moderate Somalis to speak in Sweden, Fahlen pointed out. Director-General for Development Cooperation Jan Knutsson emphasized that although Sweden had reduced the number of countries receiving Swedish assistance, Africa remained a top priority, adding that four of the top five aid recipients of Swedish aid are in Africa. (Sweden has a long history of providing assistance to Africa, including more than 60 years of aid to Ethiopia.) In an interesting aside, Fahlen opined that the U.S. might be the only actor that could &pressure8 Bashir not to run for President in Sudan. A/S Carson,s dinner interlocutors were extremely enthusiastic about working closely with the U.S. during Sweden,s EU Presidency and praised President Obama,s speech in Ghana.

¶18. (C) A/S Carson also met with Swedish State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Frank Belfrage and Director-General for Political Affairs Bjorn Lyrvall on July 14, prior to the start of the troika meeting. Belfrage stated that Sweden supports the Djibouti Process, the TFG and Sheik Sharif, adding that &Al-Shabaab could well take over if the TNG fails.8 A/S Carson noted that success will hinge on Sheik Sharif,s ability to mobilize his forces, fight and begin to act like a government. Sheik Sharif is disadvantaged against Al-Shabaab by the fact that he is not a warlord, but an Islamic scholar with no training in conducting warfare. A/S Carson stressed the U.S. is moving toward a holistic view of Somalia and the region that transcends a purely counter-terrorism perspective.

¶19. (C) At the end of the formal meeting, Belfrage pulled aside A/S Carson and the CDA to discuss "a sensitive matter." He explained that the Swedish government is under intense pressure from its public (in the form of petitions and continuing headlines in the press) to engage Eritrea in order to obtain the release imprisoned Swedish-Eritrean journalist Isaak Dawit. Belfrage reported that direct bilateral contacts with Eritrea have not worked, and an approach via the Foreign Minister of Qatar &backfired.8 (Eritrea,s President Isaias Afwerki publicly condemned Sweden for asking the Qataris to help release the journalist.) Belfrage said another option is for Sweden to ask the Libyans for help. A final option is to ask the EU to put aid to Eritrea on hold; he said the EU Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid Louis Michel has warned the Eritreans, most recently at the AU meeting in Sirte, Libya, that aid may be reexamined as a result of human rights policies. Belfrage asked if the U.S. had suggestions on possible approaches to Eritrea.

¶20. (C) A/S Carson replied that the USG also is attempting to reach out to Eritrea as part of our general approach of seeking diplomatic engagement with a number of regimes, including Iran, Syria, and Cuba. To date, the U.S. approaches to Eritrea have not been fruitful, and A/S Carson detailed his unsuccessful attempts to obtain a visa to Eritrea prior to his trip the week before to Ethiopia and Kenya. Secretary Clinton also has attempted to call President Isaias Afwerki unsuccessfully, he noted.

Underlining USG concern with Eritrean support for al-Shabaab in Somalia, A/S Carson commented that our willingness to

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engage with Eritrea is not an open-ended offer.

¶21. (U) This cable has been cleared by A/S Carson.

SILVERMAN